

Application No. 09/187,472
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56. (twice amended) A method for uniformly roasting coffee beans at a plurality of geographically separate locations comprising the steps of placing a roasting machine at each location inside an enclosed room frequented by humans; equipping each roasting machine with a roasting container for holding fresh beans while they are being roasted, a hot air supply for heating the fresh beans to a roasting temperature, and an air removal system for directing used air away from the container; removing from the used air substantially all debris, smoke, oil, and other pollutants; after the step of removing, cooling at least a portion of the used air; [and] discharging [it] the used air into the enclosed room while continuing to heat the fresh beans; directing a laser light beam of a frequency in the range of between about 600-800 nm onto the beans in the container during roasting; generating an output signal from laser light reflected by the beans which is a function of the observed darkness of the beans; providing each roasting machine with a computer including; a memory; feeding the output signal to the computer; at a central control station determining an optimal darkness for each bean type that will be roasted by the roasting machines; at the control station generating a control signal which reflects the optimal darkness of each roasted bean type; downloading the control signal from the central control station to the computer of each roasting machine; during roasting at any given roasting machine comparing the control signal stored in the associated memory with the output signal generated by the instrument; when the compared signals match, generating a command signal; and using the command signal to terminate the roasting of the beans in the container.

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62. (amended) A method of roasting a food product comprising the steps of establishing the degree to which the product must be roasted to attain a desired aroma; generating a measurable first parameter which is indicative that the product has been sufficiently roasted to yield the desired aroma; storing the first parameter; roasting; fresh product at a roasting temperature by flowing heated air over the fresh product; while flowing heated air over the fresh product removing substantially all pollutants from the air downstream of the fresh product being heated[;], cooling the air downstream of the fresh product to substantially room temperature, and thereafter exhausting the cooled air into a room of a building; monitoring a second parameter which is compatible with the first parameter and is